

WASHINGTON'S PROHIBITION TRAGEDY

IF THE SHOOTING OF SENATOR GREENE in a running battle with bootleggers within a few blocks of the United States Capitol "does not bring the Prohibition situation to a head in Washington," declares the *Troy Record*, "nothing will." The Senator from Vermont, it will be recalled, was struck by a stray bullet in an exchange of shots between bootleggers and Prohibition enforcement officers. Moreover, we are informed by the Philadelphia *Public Ledger's* Washington correspondent, "this incident is not the first in which the lives of those on the streets here have been endangered by pistol battles with bootleggers." In fact, says the Richmond *Times-Dispatch*, "this case, while conspicuous because of its victim's position, is a typical one." In the opinion of the Pittsburgh *Chronicle-Telegraph*, it "serves to call attention to the reckless use of deadly weapons by officers of the law in all our American cities," and we find this belief expressed by other widely scattered papers, which compare the streets of Washington to Mexico in time of revolution. As the Springfield *Union* remarks:

"That a United States Senator, walking with his wife on Pennsylvania Avenue, should be brought down by a bullet from a Prohibition enforcement agent's revolver, is a sad commentary on the manner in which the Commissioners of the District of Columbia view their responsibility for the public safety, on the methods and practices tolerated, if not directly sanctioned, by the Prohibition Enforcement Bureau, and on the whole scheme of national Prohibition, with its country-wide crop of evils.

"But now Congress is deeply stirred by the nation's disgrace, and something will be done, promptly, no doubt, to make the streets of Washington safer. Whether anything will or, indeed, can be done to insure better enforcement of the Prohibition Law, in Washington or elsewhere, is another question."

The Prohibition situation in Washington, for months a "center of criticism and controversy," to quote the *Ledger's* correspondent, is thus brought into the limelight. As this Washington observer explains:

"The whole question has been complicated by a three-cornered dispute joined in by agents of the Prohibition unit, officers of the intelligence division of the Treasury Department and the city police. Recently police and Prohibition officials engaged in a legal battle, in which serious charges were made against members of both forces, and several on both sides were suspended.

"While all of this has been in progress charges of liquor-buying by high officials and ordinary citizens alike have been on the increase. Not long ago it was announced that a list of hundreds of names of prominent bootleggers' customers had been seized in a police raid, but the superiors of those who made the raid so successfully shifted responsibility for the list that the names themselves finally disappeared entirely from public attention.

"There have been repeated demands in Congress for an investigation, but every move for a public inquiry into conditions has failed for one reason or another."

The Richmond *Times-Dispatch*, however, maintains that—

"No question of Prohibition is properly involved in the shooting in Washington of Senator Greene by a Prohibition officer. The question, if there is any, is the recurrent question of utterly reckless shooting by officers—whether they happen to be assigned to Prohibition enforcement or to some other line of duty."

Obviously, agrees the Pittsburgh *Post*, "there should be the

greatest care against shooting in the streets; the lives of the humblest as well as the highest must be protected." This is also the Philadelphia *Inquirer's* stand, while the Washington *Post* declares:

"These shooting exhibitions smack of lawlessness in law enforcement, and register reckless disregard of the public's right to use of the highways without being subjected to deadly peril. It is well to apprehend those who violate the Prohibition Law. But enforcement officers are not warranted in carrying their efforts to violent lengths that endanger the lives of all in their path. Even if the fleeing are known to be guilty, that is no warrant for gun-play that may strike down others. It is better that ninety and nine guilty should escape than that one innocent person should be injured or killed."

The Washington *Star*, on the other hand, while admitting that the pursuit of Prohibition violators through the streets in open warfare is a "grave public danger," questions "whether there should be any slackening in the pursuit of lawbreakers or any change of method." Continues this Washington paper:

"Perhaps the enforcement officers in this case were too 'quick on the trigger.' Possibly they showed poor judgment in firing after the fleeing violators at that particular place. But it must be remembered that they are charged with the duty of catching liquor-runners.

"The chance of police shots hitting innocent people of whatever rank in life is ever present in these days of bold crime in the cities of this country. Are the police to be deprived of their arms, or enjoined against firing save in self-defense? Such an order would make for more crime, for immunity for the lawbreakers. They are bold and desperate. Apparently only the fear of death will deter them from their nefarious enterprises. Is the law to be allowed to lapse for lack of enforcement?"

"This case doubtless will cause a careful consideration by those in authority of the methods whereby enforcement officers are to carry on their work. It should not, however, react to check the pursuit of lawbreakers."

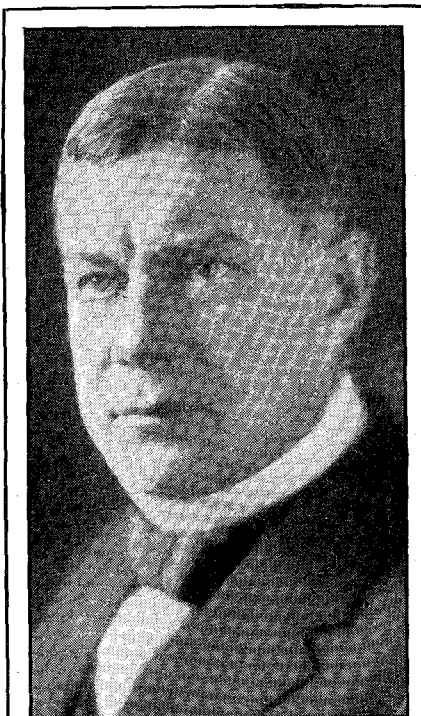
While the Richmond *Times-Dispatch* says the question of Prohibition is not involved in the shooting of Senator Greene, the Boston *Globe* believes Prohibition enforcement directly to blame for this and other similar accidents. In fact, avers this paper, "the tide of lawlessness over the Volstead Law has reached a point where any one may be shot, anywhere, at any time." Continues *The Globe*:

"Morning after morning, as one scans the news, he finds paragraphs telling of the gun-play incident to the enforcement, the non-enforcement and the flouting of the Eighteenth Amendment. Shots are heard at night; high-powered cars rush through the darkness; dead bodies are picked up. The explanation accepted wholesale is—'bootleggers.'

"The situation has become a national shame. It admits of no delay and demands the wisest and most energetic action. No nation can exist half law-abiding and half lawless. The only choice is between a new law or real enforcement."

The New Haven *Journal-Courier* also is of the opinion that "the manner and spirit in which the Prohibition Law is being enforced is developing a counterspirit of lawlessness throughout the country." Therefore, thinks the New Haven paper:

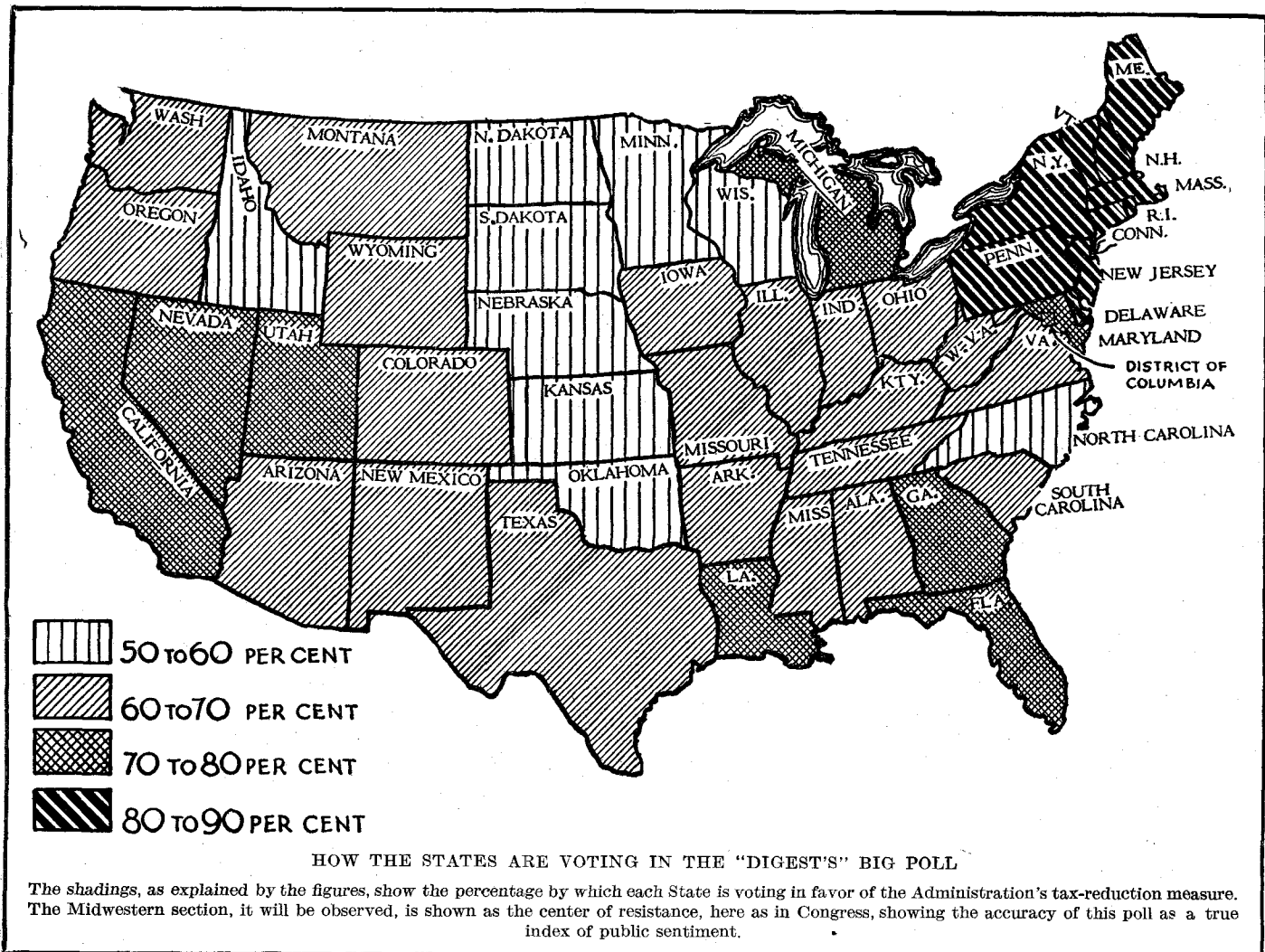
"A law which can produce such results as this law is producing from week to week, constantly increasing in violence, is not a law to consider with reference to its even more strict enforcement but is a law calling for reconsideration—not for the desertion of sound temperance legislation, but for the promotion of it."



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THE VICTIM

Of Washington's recent Prohibition tragedy. Senator Frank L. Greene, of Vermont, struck by a stray bullet in an exchange of shots between Prohibition enforcement agents and bootleggers.



TAX-REDUCTION IN THE LIGHT OF 1,500,000 VOTES

CONGRESS, IN ITS RELATION to the mixture of tax-reduction plans now before it, may be interestingly diagnosed by The Digest's big poll on the Mellon Plan. The above map puts the matter in a nutshell. The nearly white wedge of States, beginning with North Dakota and Minnesota and extending down to Oklahoma, is furnishing the center of opposition to the Mellon Plan. Radical Republicanism has gone Democratic, it appears, to the extent of backing the Democratic substitute measure fostered by Mr. Garner. This part of the country, from the first published returns in the Digest's poll of the nation, has shown itself even more strongly opposed than the "solid South" to the Administration's measure. With the present huge total of virtually a million and a half votes, which may be considered fairly representative of the taxation attitude of the United States as a whole, this central wedge, flanked by North Carolina on the east and Idaho on the west, is revealed as the center of opposition to Mr. Mellon and his taxation ideas.

Even here, however, it must be pointed out, the Mellon Plan has a decided majority. No State has, thus far, given it a minority vote. The question throughout the country is merely one of the size of majority which the plan enjoys.

The States which are furnishing the chief opposition, both in Congress and in the Digest poll, belong to several groups. It may be interesting to classify them together, in order to see how much voting influence they wield in the country as a whole, as well as how they are voting on tax-reduction.

The average vote of the nine States least in favor of the Mellon Plan—North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Minnesota, Wisconsin, North Carolina and Idaho—is practically 56 per cent. in favor of the Mellon Plan, running from 52 per cent. in the case of South Dakota to 59 per cent. for Wis-

consin, while the present percentage for the country at large is 68.7 in favor of the plan to 31.3 opposed. This group, shown as the whitest area on the map, cast 3,935,911 ballots in the last Presidential election. The group giving 60 to 70 per cent. in favor of the plan cast 12,004,343 ballots; the group giving 70 to 80 per cent. cast 3,012,114; and the group giving 80 to 90 per cent. cast 7,710,252. An interesting detail, in connection with the 80 to 90 per cent. group, shown in heavy black diagonal lining at the upper right-hand corner of the map, is the fact that New York's Democratic representatives, in spite of their State's strong leaning toward the Mellon Plan, stuck to party lines, and by their vote for the Garner Plan, assisted by the vote of radical Republicans who "broke ranks" in the West North Central States, defeated the Mellon measure in the Lower House. The division, of course, between the two measures hinges chiefly on the question of high or low surtaxes. Neither the Garner bill nor the Mellon Plan provides for the soldiers' bonus, which seemed to be so important a consideration when the question of tax-reduction was first opened up.

The percentages of the total vote, tabulated this week, for and against the Administration measure, are practically unchanged from last week, when the percentage in favor of the plan had fallen from 81.5 in the first week, to 69.03, a loss of more than 10 points. The present percentage of 68.7, showing a loss of less than half a point, as compared with the much larger descent in the preceding three weeks, seems to suggest that the poll is tending to stabilize itself. Cries of "Propaganda!" have come from several quarters where there is disagreement with the poll's indication, maintained by a million and a half ballots from all over the country, that the American electorate is for the Mellon Plan by a majority of more than 2 to 1. Pub-